

Switzerland's Domestic and International Postal Services during July 1, 1862 – November 30, 1891

Introduction to a Postal History Exhibit

Domestic Rates

The period July 1, 1862 – November 30, 1891, saw great changes in Swiss postal history. For domestic mail the simplification of postal rates (1862) reduced distance zones for letters from three to two, and for printed matter from two to one country-wide. Unpaid and underpaid mail became subject to the first postage due penalty charges (1862). The introduction of postal stationery included envelopes (1867), cards (1870) and printed matter wrapper bands (1871). The postal takeover of delivery of judicial documents led to special rates (1875).

During this period basic rates changed twice (1876, 1884) for most postal services, including the following that were introduced earlier: registered mail, parcel post for insured letters with declared values, and cash collections of bills. Free postage also continued and expanded for official and military mail. This exhibit ends before the introduction of new basic rates on December 1, 1891. All covers in this exhibit are postmarked before that date.

International Destinations

Land-locked Switzerland needed to maintain individual postal conventions with neighboring countries – France, German States, Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Italy – for mail delivery to them and forwarding to destinations worldwide. Because of the complexity of multiple routes to any place beyond these neighbors, its international services are arranged by destinations rather than by the individual conventions with their different rates to the same country based on different routes and periods. With the start of the Universal Postal Union, Switzerland as a founding member adopted at once its standardized rates for members and non-members (1875).

Mixed Frankings

At different times during the period of this exhibit, ten types of postal issues were available: imperforate Sitting Helvetias, perforated Sitting Helvetias, Cross & Numerals, Standing Helvetias, envelopes, cards, printed matter wrapper bands, postage due stamps, private hotel stamps, and free frank stationery or etiquettes. Because of overlapping periods of validity for these issues, this exhibit includes a variety of mixed frankings, some the only recorded examples.

Organization (Frame:Page)

<u>Domestic Mail</u>		Cash collections	4:13-5:4
		Free postage	5:5-5:12
		Hotel posts	5:13-5:16
Local letters	1:2-1:8	<u>International Mail</u>	
Non-local letters	1:9-1:16	Europe	6:1-8:16
Cards	2:1-2:8	Rest of world	9:1-10:11
Printed matter	2:9-2:16	UPU	10:12-10:16
Registered mail	3:1-3:8		
Postage due	3:9-3:16		
Judicial documents	4:1-4:4		
Insured parcels	4:5-4:12		